

CulinaryMap

AI itinerary planner for food-tasting trips — pairs restaurants by cuisine + queue times + route optimisation + dietary needs. Niche but obsessive audience that no one serves well at \$9 per trip.

Category	Set 6 · Consumer & Family
Customer	Food enthusiasts planning tasting trips (1-7 days) in a destination city; restaurant-pilgrimage travellers; foodie couples + groups
Monetisation	\$9 per trip · \$29/yr unlimited Standard · \$59/yr Pro (with restaurant reservation + dietary-deep filtering)
Build effort	Low
Plan version	v1.0 — 2026-05

Executive Summary

CulinaryMap is an AI itinerary planner specifically for food-tasting trips. The wedge: generic AI trip planners + Google Maps + Yelp can list restaurants but cannot construct an actually-eatable food itinerary that respects realistic per-meal stomach capacity, queue patterns (Sukiyabashi Jiro requires 2-month-advance booking; many top restaurants only take lunch reservations), geographic clustering (don't put two dinner stops at opposite ends of Tokyo), dietary integration (vegetarian + gluten-free + nut-free routing through a city), and the natural rhythm of food-tasting travel (peak meal is at dinner; lunch is testing; snack-tasting in afternoon).

Product: per-destination + per-trip-duration AI itinerary with structured meal blocks (breakfast + mid-morning snack + lunch + afternoon snack + dinner + late-night) populated with specific restaurant + queue-strategy + dietary-fit + travel-time-aware recommendations. Plus reservation booking integration for tier-1 restaurants.

Year-1 target: 12,000 paid trips + 1,500 annual subscribers generating ■1.2 crore annual revenue against ■22 lakh costs. Cash-positive month 2. Niche but obsessive audience; sustainable focused-vertical business.

The Problem

Food enthusiasts planning tasting trips face a real planning problem. Existing tools fail. Google Maps lists restaurants without curation. Yelp + TripAdvisor have reviews but no itinerary structure. Generic AI trip planners (ChatGPT) produce itineraries that recommend 8 hours of eating per day or restaurants on opposite ends of city. Specialist food-travel content (Eater 38 lists + Michelin guides) is publication-format not itinerary-format.

The constraints are real. Per-meal stomach capacity (you can eat seriously at perhaps 3-4 restaurants per day before quality degrades). Queue + reservation patterns (top restaurants are 2-12 weeks advance booking; some only-walk-in with 2-hour queues). Geographic clustering (Tokyo's food districts are real and matter). Dietary integration (vegetarian routing through meat-heavy cuisines like Japanese or Spanish is challenging).

Market gap: a structured itinerary product specifically for this use case at \$9-29 price point.

The Solution

CulinaryMap's flow. User enters destination + dates + group size + dietary preferences + cuisine interests + experience tolerance (adventurous vs. classic). AI generates structured day-by-day food itinerary with meal blocks populated by specific restaurant recommendations + queue/reservation strategy + travel-time between stops + dietary-fit notation.

Curated restaurant database: 25,000+ restaurants across 100+ destinations with structured metadata (cuisine + price + dietary fit + queue patterns + reservation requirements + Michelin/Bib Gourmand status + local-favourite vs. tourist-popular classification).

Per-trip output: detailed day-by-day itinerary with morning + lunch + afternoon + dinner + late-night blocks; each restaurant recommendation with reasoning + alternative + reservation guidance.

Pro tier (\$59/yr) adds: integrated reservation booking (where API available with Resy + OpenTable + TheFork); deep dietary filtering (e.g., gluten-free + sesame-allergic + nightshade-free through a destination); private-dining + chef's-table recommendations.

Three structural differences from generic options. First, food-itinerary-specific (respects per-meal capacity + queue/reservation reality). Second, structured day-by-day output. Third, dietary-deep integration.

Market Opportunity

Food-tasting travellers globally: ~25-40M trips/year where food is primary activity. Willing-to-pay: ~3-5M for structured itinerary planning.

At blended \$20/trip + subscription mix, SAM is ~\$60-120M annually. Realistic 4-year capture: 1-3% = \$600k-3.6M ARR. Niche but defensible.

Adjacent expansion. Year 2: tasting-tour partnerships (referral fee to specialty food tour operators). Concierge tier (\$199 per trip with human food-travel consultant). Cookbook + cuisine-deep-dive content monetisation.

Target Customer

Primary persona: a 38-year-old foodie planning solo 5-day Tokyo trip focused on sushi + ramen + tempura. Will pay \$9 for structured itinerary covering ~15 restaurant stops across 5 days.

Secondary persona: a 41-year-old couple planning anniversary Italy trip across Rome + Bologna + Florence (10 days). Will pay \$29/yr Standard for unlimited multi-destination trips.

Tertiary persona: a 35-year-old food creator + content producer travelling 8+ trips/year for food content. Will pay \$59/yr Pro tier for reservation integration + deep filtering.

Product

Trip planning intake: destination + dates + group + dietary + cuisine interests + adventure tolerance.

Restaurant database: 25,000+ curated restaurants with structured metadata.

Itinerary generation: structured day-by-day output with meal blocks + restaurant recommendations + queue strategy + travel-time.

Reservation integration (Pro): Resy + OpenTable + TheFork API booking.

Dietary filtering (Pro): deep restrictive-diet routing.

Trip sharing + collaboration: itinerary shareable with companions for review.

Export: PDF + Apple Wallet + Google Maps list for in-trip navigation.

Technical Architecture

Frontend: Next.js + React Native mobile.

Backend: Python on Hetzner cloud, Postgres.

Restaurant database: curated + maintained via in-house content team + community contributions + verified sources.

AI itinerary generation: GPT-4o + Claude for structured itinerary composition (~\$0.50 per itinerary).

Reservation integrations: Resy + OpenTable + TheFork APIs.

Payments: Stripe + Razorpay.

Business Model & Unit Economics

Three pricing structures. Per-trip (\$9): single trip itinerary. Standard subscription (\$29/yr): unlimited trips. Pro subscription (\$59/yr): reservation integration + deep dietary filtering + private-dining.

Conversion: per-trip → subscription conversion 18% within 4 trips. Distribution: 60% per-trip, 28% Standard, 12% Pro.

Gross margin: 90% (digital + light data costs).

LTV: \$25 lifetime per per-trip customer; \$58 × 2 yrs = \$116 (Standard); \$118 × 2.5 yrs = \$295 (Pro).

Unit Economics (Year-1 base case)

Year-1 paid trips	12,000
Year-1 annual subscribers	1,500
Year-1 revenue	\$145,000 (~₹1.2 crore)
Gross margin	90%
CAC	\$8
Year-1 all-in costs	~₹22 lakh
Year-1 net contribution	~₹95 lakh

Go-to-Market

Channel 1 — Food-creator partnerships (45%): Eater + Bon Appétit + food YouTubers + food-Instagram creators.

Channel 2 — SEO (30%): per-destination food-itinerary content.

Channel 3 — Food-community organic (15%): r/FoodPorn + r/Tokyo + city-specific food subreddits.

Channel 4 — Paid acquisition (10%).

Roadmap (first 12 months)

- Month 1-3: MVP with 30 destinations + per-trip pricing. 800 paid trips.
- Month 4-5: Subscription tiers + 60 destinations, 3,500 trips cumulative.
- Month 6-8: Pro tier with reservation integration + dietary deep filtering, 7,000 trips + 600 subscribers.
- Month 9-10: 100 destinations + concierge tier, 10,000 trips.
- Month 11-12: 12,000 trips + 1,500 subscribers, ₹1.2 crore year-1 revenue.

Key Risks

- Restaurant data freshness: restaurants close + change reservation policies. Mitigated by content team + automated freshness signals + community-feedback flagging.
- Reservation API access: Resy + OpenTable may restrict access. Mitigated by multi-platform support + manual-reservation-guidance fallback.
- Niche audience scale: small absolute market. Mitigated by accepting focused-niche business shape.
- Generic AI tools improving — possible. Mitigated by curated-database depth + restaurant-specific knowledge.
- Seasonal travel cycles. Mitigated by year-round destination diversity.